

News Release

NATE EMERY WINS TOP WILDLIFE STUDENT AWARD

By Dan Svedarsky on Tuesday, March 14, 2006

Crookston, MN—University of Minnesota, Crookston (UMC) graduate Nate Emery was recently awarded the Student Conservationist Award by the Minnesota Chapter of The Wildlife Society at their annual meeting in Brainerd. Emery is a fall semester 2005 graduate in Wildlife Management from the UMC's Natural Resources Department where he achieved a 3.6 grade point average. The prestigious award recognizes the top wildlife management students in all of Minnesota's colleges and universities and marks the 6th time in the last 9 years that a UMC wildlife student has won this honor! "We are so proud of Nate in achieving this honor," notes Natural Resources Department Head, Dan Svedarsky. "Nate adds this distinction to a long list of accolades at UMC. He has won practically every achievement award and recognition that is possible at our campus. Beyond that, and fortunate for the field of natural resources, he is interested in wildlife conservation!"

Emery has been active in conservation matters as well as being co-captain of the football team and President of the Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society. He received the 2005 Man of the Year Award in recognition of his all-around contributions to campus leadership and citizenship. This is the highest campus award of this sort and is indicative of his broad swath of influence and balance. He is also a past recipient of the Norman Pankratz Award, the highest award that a student can receive in the Natural Resources Department.

For the last couple of years, Emery has been the driving force behind the "Nature Nook" project, a habitat restoration initiative between Owen and Hill Halls and within view of most UMC students. This aims to restore a micro-cosm of a Boreal Forest, Prairie, and Deciduous forest with an Oak Savanna in the transition area. He authored a grant application to the National Wildlife Federation's Campus Ecology program for development funds. That application was unsuccessful but, undaunted, he tweaked the application and submitted to the Minnesota Chapter of The Wildlife Society and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation; receiving \$ 1,000 in support funds from each. As Emery was completing his UMC studies, he mentored younger students to pick up the ball and carry things forward on the project. The enduring educational aspects of this project are significant as each class makes contributions to the developments. Recently, the Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society and the Natural Resources Club were awarded a \$1,400 grant from the University of Minnesota's Beautiful U program to install a walkway to interpret the biomes in Nature Nook.

In the summer of 2005, Emery conducted a bird inventory on the Glacial Ridge project east of Crookston under the mentorship of Dr. John Loegering. Further, they developed a poster presentation which Emery presented in December at the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Emery's interests are board as evidenced by him serving a term on the board of the Northwest Sustainable Regional Partnership. He assisted with the staging of a 2-day conference in October of 2005 entitled, "Sustainable Development - global priorities, local applications." He and a student from Bemidji State University co-presented a paper on student views and application of sustainability. He was a part of the UMC campus, "Sustainability Squad," a loose-knit group of students who discussed various applications of sustainability in their lives and the campus environment. He practices what he preaches as well. He drives a tiny car that is at some personal safety risk but gets over 50 miles to the gallons; not the sort of macho machine that might be more becoming to a football linebacker.

Nate continues to teach himself about nature and was UMC's most active birder. He regularly posted bird sighting on the regional birding list serv and his enthusiasm was infectious. He volunteered as a naturalist for young people at the Agassiz Environmental Learning Center at Fertile and also the Red River Valley Natural History Area.

"Nate is also a very wholesome guy and is always a gentleman in speech and manner," adds Svedarsky. "During most of his college career, he would drive some 40 miles or so and teach young people's Sunday School at a small rural church near Fertile. Most of his college buds would be fast asleep and this would be after a Saturday pounding on the football field. This is not part of the criteria for this sort of an award but it says something about the make-up of this young man and his balanced life and concern for others."

Emery is currently a wildlife research technician along the Platte River in Nebraska where he is collecting data on food resource use by migrating waterfowl. He is employed by the Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center, a federal research facility located in Jamestown, North Dakota. He is evaluating options for graduate school where he plans to complete a Master's degree in either wildlife ecology or sustainable development.

UMC is a four-year baccalaureate degree granting institution and a coordinate campus of the University of Minnesota. Other majors in natural resources at UMC in addition to, Wildlife Management, are; Water Resources Management, Natural Resources Management, Natural Resources Law Enforcement, and Park Management. Golf and Turf Management, Horticulture, and Aviation majors are also offered by the Department. Contact Dan Svedarsky at 218-281-8129 or Sue Legare at 218-281-8128 for more information.

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